

TALMUD TORAH OF MINNEAPOLIS



Barry Family Community Campus
4330 S. Cedar Lake Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Phone 952-381-3300
www.Talmudtorahmpls.org

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017-2018, 5778

Rabbi Harold Kravitz, Adath
Rabbi Avi Olitzky, Beth-El
Dan Weiss, Board President
Debby Litman, Interim Executive Director
Kara Rosenwald, Director of Culture and Community

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contact Information	3
The Mission and Goals of Talmud Torah	4
About Our School	5
The Structure of Talmud Torah	5
General School Policies	6-9
Attendance	
Absences	
Arriving Late/Leaving Early	
Discipline	
Student Code of Conduct	
Progressive Discipline Policy	
Kashrut / Food and Beverages	
Kippot / Head Covering	
Books and Supplies	
Technology / Hand-Held Electronic Devices	
Visitors	
Student Safety	10-11
Medical Emergencies and Services	
Safety Related to the Building	
Dropping Off and Picking Up Students	
School Closings Due to Weather or Other Emergencies	
The School - Parent Partnership	12-13
Communicating with Teachers and Other Staff	
Informational Updates	
Progress Reports	
Parent - Teacher Conferences	
Homework	
Field Trips and Special Events	

CONTACT INFORMATION

Debby Litman - Interim Executive Director

Phone: 952-381-3306

Email: dzelle@talmudtorahmpls.org

Barb Yanish - Director of Finance

Email: byanish@talmudtorahmpls.org

Kara Rosenwald - Director of Culture and Community

Phone: 952-381-3315

Email: krosenwald@talmudtorahmpls.org

Ilana Yarmak - Bookkeeping

Phone: 952-381-3303

Email: iyarmak@talmudtorahmpls.org

Dan Geller - IT/Administrative Support

Phone: 952-381-3314

Email: dgeller@talmudtorahmpls.org

Etta Bernstein - Reading Coordinator

Email: eberstein@talmudtorahmpls.org

Web: talmudtorahmpls.org

Weather Hotline: 952.381.3333

MISSION



The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, the school of Adath Jeshurun and Beth El congregations, engages students of all backgrounds in educational experiences that provide a foundation and the lifelong tools for living an intentionally Jewish life.

VISION: TO BE A THRIVING SCHOOL THAT OFFERS A CURRICULUM RELEVANT TO OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES, THAT INSPIRES A COMMITMENT TO TORAH AND JEWISH LIVING, AND THAT BUILDS A DEEPER CONNECTION WITH THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND ALL JEWISH PEOPLE.

SEVEN OUTCOMES FOR OUR TALMUD TORAH STUDENTS

At Talmud Torah, we provide our students with a solid and well-rounded Jewish education. Our curriculum has been designed with the intent of giving our students the knowledge and experience they need in order to:

- Take pride in being Jewish and develop a strong Jewish identity
- Participate in and perform rituals and traditions in a synagogue and at home
- Feel a connection and sense of responsibility to *Klal Israel* (the Jewish people) and all of Humanity.
- Live their lives according to Jewish ethics and values
- Create a deep love for and connection to the land of Israel
- Become intellectually confident about the core beliefs, philosophy and theology of Judaism and their relevance to their lives
- Inspire them to pursue life-long Jewish learning, and possess the basic skills necessary to do so.



THE FACES OF TALMUD TORAH



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Talmud Torah of Minneapolis is over 115 years old. We serve students in grades 2 through 8. There are two divisions: elementary school for grades 2-5 and middle school for grades 6-8.

Talmud Torah operates with a Board of Directors made up of individual lay-leaders from Adath Jeshurun Congregation and Beth El Synagogue as well as Clergy and Executive Directors from both synagogues and the Interim Executive Director of Talmud Torah. There are also several sub-committees of the board including a finance committee, a fundraising committee and a family connections committee.

For the upcoming school year 2017-2018, Dan Weiss is the President of the board.

THE STRUCTURE OF TALMUD TORAH

OUR DIVISIONS

- **Our Elementary Division is for grades 2-5.**
 - Students in this division attend school as follows:
 - Bet (2nd Grade), Gimel (3rd Grade), Dalet (4th Grade), and Hey (5th grade) students attend two times per week:
 - Wednesday from 4:00-6:00 PM and Sunday from 9:00 AM-12 PM **OR**
 - Tuesday and Thursday from 4:00-6:30 PM

- **Our Middle School Division is for grades 6-8.**
 - Students in this division attend school as follows:
 - Vav (6th grade) students attend two times per week: Mon/Wed from 6:10-8:00 (with the middle school) OR Tues/Thurs from 4:30–6:30 PM (with elementary)
 - Zayin (7th Grade) students attend twice a week: Monday/Wednesday from 6:10 – 8:00 PM
 - Hey (8th Grade) students meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:10 – 9:00.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Talmud Torah is dedicated to student learning. The process of education requires continuity: of instruction from trained professionals, classroom contact, and participation with peers. In order for students to get the most out of their Jewish education and to maximize their social integration, regular attendance is critical. We expect Talmud Torah students to attend at least 70% of all class sessions, barring extenuating circumstances.

ABSENCES

- Parents are expected to notify the school in advance when a student will be absent from class. This may be done by calling, **952-381-3300**, or by sending an email to dgeller@talmudtorahmpls.org. The office will then notify the appropriate teacher(s).
- Attendance is taken by teachers at each class. We share information about individual students' attendance with their Synagogues.
- Students are responsible for obtaining and making up any missed work. The information covered in class that day, as well as any homework assignments, are posted by each teacher on your RenWeb Parent Portal. Good communication between students, parents, and teachers will help ensure that students keep up to date with the material being learned by their classmates.

ARRIVING LATE/LEAVING EARLY

- If a student needs to leave early, please notify the office in advance. This may be done by calling the school office, **952-381-3300**, or by sending a note with the student, or sending an email to dgeller@talmudtorahmpls.org. The office will then notify the appropriate teacher(s). **Parents must come into the HMJDS main office to pick up a student early. Kids WILL NOT be sent to any exit door on their own. Students may not leave the building unsupervised under any circumstance. For more information about picking up your student early, please see the section on Drop Off and Pick Up Policies.**

DISCIPLINE

- A school discipline policy can help prevent and control student behavior problems by coordinating the schools' disciplinary procedures and by informing students what types of behavior are expected of them and what types are forbidden.
- We strive to create an environment in which positive behaviors are encouraged and reinforced. At the point where a child's behavior becomes disruptive, asocial and/or destructive enough to impede their learning or the learning of other children, teachers and administration will follow the Progressive Disciplinary Policy (PDP). Below is our Student Code of Conduct including the minimal behavioral expectations of our students followed by the PDP.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה

PROPER RESPECT PRECEDES THE STUDY OF TORAH

As a school community, we strive to create an atmosphere that promotes the Jewish values we teach and cherish. In order to do so in a positive and growth-oriented manner, we have developed a set of guidelines for behavioral expectations for students at Talmud Torah. They clearly state what our values are, and clarify what the consequences will be if our school community is disrupted. Below are the guiding principles on which students are to conduct themselves at Talmud Torah:

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT

- Students should speak to their classmates, faculty, staff, and others courteously and with appropriate language and behavior.
- Harassment of any kind – verbal, physical, or sexual - will not be tolerated.
- Interpersonal conflicts must be resolved in a non-aggressive manner.

לעסוק בדברי תורה

THE MITZVAH OF STUDYING TORAH: TREAT LEARNING WITH RESPECT

- Students should arrive to class on time ready to work.
- Students may not create situations (verbally or behaviorally) that disrupt or prevent teachers from teaching or their classmates from learning.

בל תשחית

TREAT PROPERTY (PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL) WITH RESPECT

- Students must be careful and not cause any purposeful damage to the Talmud Torah facility, books, displays, furniture, etc.....
- Damaging the personal property of fellow students and/or faculty is prohibited.
- Stealing of property or ideas (cheating and plagiarism) is forbidden.

פיקוח נפש

TREAT PEOPLE'S SAFETY WITH RESPECT

- No potentially dangerous objects or weapons are allowed anywhere on campus.
- The use or possession of drugs or alcohol is forbidden, as is smoking tobacco.
- Harassment or physical altercations will not be tolerated.
- Once on campus, students may not leave until dismissal time without parental consent.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINARY POLICY

For a first offense, the teacher gives the student a verbal reminder that what they are doing is against policy. The second time it occurs, the student is given a verbal warning by the teacher, and the parents are notified. The third incident will result in a consequence – being sent to the Interim Executive Director, who will work with the teacher, student and parent(s) as necessary to determine an appropriate course of action.

Based on the seriousness of the offense, Talmud Torah reserves the right to determine what steps to take, including the right to suspend or expel the student. Should this occur, tuition will not be refunded. Students and parents will be held financially responsible for any property damage, which a student may cause.

Students who feel they are being treated unfairly or with disrespect are encouraged to speak with their teacher(s) (or have their parents do so) so that the issues can be resolved appropriately. The Interim Executive Director is always available to any student and/or parent. Everyone deserves the right to be heard and have their issues and feelings taken seriously.

KASHRUT/FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- Many students have food allergies. Some of these allergies may be truly life-threatening. Also, many parents have concerns about their children eating a healthy and balanced diet. In addition, Talmud Torah is a Kosher facility, thus ensuring that families of all levels of religious observance are comfortable eating here. For all these reasons, we strongly discourage bringing in food to Talmud Torah. For students who are hungry and thirsty, Talmud Torah sells some snacks and beverages, all of which are certified Kosher.
- Any snacks or beverages brought to Talmud Torah must bear a Kosher certification on the label. Remember, there are many ways to recognize and celebrate a student's birthday or other special occasions without involving food. If you do want to send food for a class, you must first get permission from the teacher and have the teacher tell you what allergy limitations and acceptable options there are for the class.
- **Students are not allowed to use the vending machines in the building during school hours.**

KIPPOT/HEAD COVERING

The wearing of a head covering reminds us that God is always with us. Our tradition also requires us to cover our heads while praying or studying sacred texts. In addition, the wearing of a kippah also shows respect for one's studies, and for the sacredness of space. Therefore, boys are required to wear kippot while at Talmud Torah, and girls are strongly encouraged to do so as well. Teachers may, at their discretion, allow alternative forms of head covering during certain studies, but only kippot may be worn during prayer, sacred studies, assemblies, and in the Bet Knesset.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

BOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Talmud Torah will supply all necessary textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets to each student. **If a book is lost, the family will be responsible for the cost of replacement.**

For the 2017-2018 school year, Talmud Torah will provide new and gently used school supplies to all Talmud Torah classes. It is a good idea for students to keep a kippah at school, marked with their name, in a plastic bag in the container with the rest of their school supplies. Parents are asked to make certain that students bring the necessary books, materials, and kippah each day they come to school. On occasion, students may be asked to bring additional items to class for special projects. In such instances, parents and students will be notified in advance.

TECHNOLOGY/HAND-HELD ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Talmud Torah is at the forefront of many exciting ways to integrate technology into Jewish education. We are proud to have several smartboards, a computer lab, wi-fi access, tablets, and more. Yet, technology has its time and place, and in an educational setting it must be a part of the teacher's lesson plan or it becomes disruptive and distracting.

The use of cell phone and other handheld electronic equipment in any form (texting, calling, photographing, etc.) is forbidden during school time. If parents need to communicate with their children, we ask that they please contact the school office and someone will deliver the message. **Cell phones used during school will be confiscated until the end of the day and then returned to students. No roller blades, bats, balls, electronic games, cd players, radios, ipods, toys or other similar items are permitted at school.** Any item extraneous to our purpose may be confiscated by the teacher or administration for the duration of school day.

VISITORS

- Parents are invited to visit any class at any time; however, **we require that they inform either the teacher or Debby in advance of a visit and that they check in with the school office upon arrival at school.** The office will then inform a teacher once a parent has made the request. If an unannounced parent comes to class, they will be asked to go to the office to "check-in" before going to class.
- Any non-parent wishing to visit class must obtain advance permission from the administration. Unauthorized visitors will be asked to leave.

STUDENT SAFETY

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND SERVICES

If a student becomes ill or is injured, staff will use reasonable judgment in determining what first aid measures can be administered. Every effort will be made to contact parents. The school cannot dispense even over-the-counter medication (e.g., Tylenol, aspirin, etc...) without the express consent of a parent (usually by phone). If your child needs us to give prescription medicine during Talmud Torah sessions, we need both the signature of the parent and the physician. If your child has a medical condition that may require attention or special consideration, please note this on the student profile you complete and turn in (it is part of the back to school packet you receive before school begins).

SAFETY RELATED TO THE BUILDING

The school building is equipped with fire detection and alarm systems. Each classroom has a map that shows the appropriate evacuation route to use in the event of fire or other emergency situations. Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills will be held each year to make certain that everyone knows and follow the proper evacuation procedures.

DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS

The safety of our students is of great importance to us. **It is the campus policy that the main drop-off and pick-up occur at the lower level north side door (# 10).** The main drop off takes place from 3:45 until 4:10 on weekdays and 8:45 until 9:10 on Sundays- After 4:10 or 9:10, Parents will need to park in the front and walk their students in and to class. This year all of the Talmud Torah classes will be on the upper level of the Heilicher Day School. Additionally, we no longer have administrative offices on the lower level. Therefore, there will not be a staff member at the north door after 4:10 during the week and after 9:10 on Sundays. On Tuesday/Thursday a staff will return downstairs at 4:30 until 4:35 for 6th grade students.

In order to be certain that students do not cross lanes of traffic to get to or from cars, especially during busy times and in the dark, we ask that you follow each of these steps.

DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

- Enter the school driveway that circles around the Campus at no faster than 5 MPH.
- Follow the driveway around to the back (north) door of the Sabes JCC using the RIGHT LANE.
- Wait behind the last car and move forward until you reach the main school door.
- Drop off your student(s) at the door and the crosswalk, always following the directions of the traffic assistant at the crosswalk.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES (FOR REGULAR ENDING TIME)

- Enter the school driveway no faster than 5 MPH and pull up behind the last car in line in the RIGHT LANE.

- Follow the car ahead of you until you reach the curb in front of the school, **and then move up as far as possible** until the curb ends. There will also be a teacher and/or administrator with an orange flag to signal waiting cars to move up.
- Students may be picked up only at the curb in front of the school so that students avoid crossing lanes of traffic.
- Only parents who are both dropping off and picking up students at the same time can use the left lane to come to the crosswalk and drop off and pick up at the same time.
- YOU MUST STAY IN YOUR CAR while waiting, since this driveway is a fire lane. This way all cars can move up quickly to load students.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WHO LEAVE BEFORE THE END OF SCHOOL

Parents who plan on picking up their students early should notify the office in advance but **MUST** come into the HMJDS office to pick up their student. Parents who have notified the office **can have their student wait for their ride in the school office. Students may not leave the building unsupervised under any circumstance.**

Please pick up your student in room M20, which is the main office for the Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School, and where Talmud Torah will be stationed during our school hours.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES

If Talmud Torah is being cancelled due to a weather-related or other emergency, we will have it broadcast over as many media as possible, but for certain we will have it announced on WCCO , KARE 11 and KSTP. In addition, you can call our weather hotline number, 952-381-3333.

We have an automated system that calls all affected parents early in the day if school will be closed.

THE SCHOOL-PARENT PARTNERSHIP

It is our sincere belief that parents are our partners in the education of their children. A successful partnership requires excellent communication, as only through an open exchange of information, thoughts, and ideas can we achieve our mutual goals. We are fortunate that we have a very sophisticated school management system, RenWeb, to help us achieve optimal and consistent communication through the parent portal.

COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF

- You may email teachers through your parent portal by clicking on your students' classroom tab or through the portal's school directory. Email is the quickest and surest way to initiate communication with our teachers regarding your student, assignments, issues or concerns.
- In addition, all administrators and other staff have email addresses which can be found through the school directory on your parent portal as well. We encourage you to contact them with any questions, concerns, compliments, or ideas. Our non-teaching staff are more easily available to speak on the phone, so please feel free to call them at our main number, 952-381-3300.

INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

Parents, you will receive an email update on the goings on around the school. Links to school announcements, calendar events, pictures, etc...will be provided in these emails. You can also check your child's class page through the RenWeb Parent Portal, as well as your student's page. Here, you will be able to see what's happening in individual classes, as well as what was taught each day, homework assignments, attendance, and behavior notices.

When there is a special event at Talmud Torah, a flyer with detailed information will be sent in advance of the event.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Teachers formally evaluate a student's progress, in writing, twice a year at the conclusion of each semester. These progress reports, which are based on performance, attendance, behavior, level of effort and other factors, are sent to the parents so they remain well-informed of their student's academic and social/emotional growth.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

In the late fall we hold Parent-Teacher conferences. Parents meet for approximately 15 minutes with their student's teacher(s) to have a face to face discussion about the student's progress. These conferences are the best way to become informed of a student's progress and to discuss any concerns, so we urge parents to take advantage of this opportunity.

HOMEWORK

We know our students' lives are busy ones, and that they often get a great deal of homework from their secular schools. That is why we try not to add any stress by giving a great deal of homework. However, we also know that

you have entrusted Talmud Torah to teach your child how to read Hebrew, an essential skill if we are to achieve our joint objectives. In order for an elementary school student to become a fluent reader, he/she MUST practice. Please make sure your student does all the reading assignments, and that you and your child allot about 15 minutes several times a week for reading practice.

In addition, we have a very full curriculum to teach within a very limited frame. Therefore, teachers may periodically assign other homework projects: e.g., a few pages of reading, a vocabulary list to memorize, a short research or opinion paper, etc. . You can check your parent portal (your student's page) at any time to learn what was covered in class on a specific day, as well as homework assignments.

FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

As part of our curriculum, a student's class may be involved in a field trip. Parents will be notified in advance and will be requested to complete and return a permission slip for each field trip. They may also be asked to serve as chaperones or drivers, and we would greatly appreciate a positive response.

Talmud Torah also holds many assemblies, special events, and family education programs throughout the year. When parents and others are invited, they will be published through flyers, newsletters, our website, etc... When a program is designed to include parent-child interaction, it is important for parents to make every effort to participate. Often, our special programs need the assistance of adult volunteers, so we hope we can count on Talmud Torah parents.